

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01 L-03 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00

AID-20 IGA-02 MC-02 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00

DRC-01 /108 W

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O 091230Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5662

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1001

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BGEN, GB

SUBJ: DC-8 FOR GABON

REF: STATE 172725, LIBREVILLE 964

1. CHARGE MET WITH PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELOR PIGOT AUGUST 9 AND ADVISED HIM THAT RETURN VISIT TO DEPARTMENT TO DISCUSS DC-8 WOULD NOT BE PRODUCTIVE. CHARGE STRESSED THAT CAREFUL ATTENTION BEING GIVEN TO DECISION WHICH WHEN MADE WOULD BE COMMUNICATED THROUGH AMBASSADOR MAVOUNGOU IMMEDIATELY.

2. PIGOT NOTED HE HAD ALREADY SEEN STRONG MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR MAVOUNGOU ADVISING THAT PIGOT/BRU MISSION BE CANCELLED. PIGOT SAID HE WAS IN DIFFICULT POSITION. BONGO'S DECISION TO SEND HIM TO U.S. REFLECTED NOT ONLY DESIRE PUSH FORWARD DECISION ON DC-8, BUT ON ASSUMPTION IT WOULD BE POSITIVE, PIGOT AND BRU WOULD BE EXPECTED AT THE SAME TIME TO WIND UP FINANCIAL AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS TO INSURE DELIVERY OF AIRCRAFT TO PARIS NO LATER THAN AUGUST 20.

3. PIGOT SAID AUGUST 20 WAS DEADLINE FOR UTA TO BEGIN
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CONVERSION AND CHECK OUT OF DC-8 IF IT IS TO BE

DELIVERED TO BONGO IN TIME FOR HIS OCTOBER MIDDLE EAST AND ASIAN SWING. PIGOT ADDED BONGO ABSOLUTELY DETERMINED NOT TO LOSE FACE WITH OTHER CHIEFS OF STATE BY NOT HAVING HIS OWN AIRCRAFT.

4. CHARGE REPLIED THAT THOUGH IT UNDERSTANDABLE BONGO WANTED MISSION, IF POSSIBLE, TO COMPLETE ALL WORK ON DC-8 DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE REFLECTED FACT ALL INFORMATION WAS NOW AVAILABLE AND BEING STUDIED. PIGOT ADMITTED HE HAD NOTHING NEW TO OFFER AND THAT BONGO'S INSISTENCE ON MISSION WAS ALSO DESIGNED TO PUSH U.S. TO FINAL DECISION. CHARGE ALSO REMINDED PIGOT THERE WAS NO GUARANTY DECISION ON AIRCRAFT WOULD BE AFFIRMATIVE. PIGOT COUNTERED THAT AS LONG AS THERE WAS REMOTEST POSSIBILITY DECISION MIGHT BE POSITIVE, BONGO WOULD WANT HIM TO GO THROUGH WITH MISSION.

5. PIGOT PROMISED INFORM BONGO OF LATEST DEVELOPMENTS, BUT CAUTIONED IF PRESIDENT INSISTED, HE WOULD STILL WISH TO MAKE PLANNED TRIP TO WASHINGTON. CHARGE NOTED THIS RESPONSE AND SAID IT WOULD BE REPORTED TO WASHINGTON.

6. COMMENT. PIGOT'S ORIGINAL PLANS WERE TO DEPART LIBREVILLE FOR PARIS TUESDAY AUGUST 13 AND PARIS TO U.S. AUGUST 15 OR 16. WITH PRESIDENT BONGO IN FRANCEVILLE WITH PRESIDENT AHIDJO, IT UNLIKELY BONGO'S CONCURRENCE TO CANCEL PIGOT MISSION COULD BE OBTAINED BEFORE AUGUST 12. I PROMISED PHONE PIGOT MORNING OF AUGUST 13 TO OBTAIN PRESIDENT'S DECISION. PIGOT PLANS GO TO PARIS IN ANY EVENT AND COULD CONCEIVABLY BE TURNED AROUND THERE IF DECISION ON AIRCRAFT MADE PRIOR TO AUGUST 15. COUNTRYMAN

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